

# MINDS WIDE OPEN

## VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS

In spring 2010, the cultural community in Virginia will celebrate the arts with performances, exhibitions, literary readings and films on the theme of *Women in the Arts*. All Virginia artists and cultural organization are invited to participate by presenting at least one program for the public between March and June of 2010 featuring *Women in the Arts*. These thousands of cultural events will be marketed as **MINDS WIDE OPEN: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts**.

### Background:

Virginia needs statewide arts collaboration. During 2007 this need was discussed at several roundtable meetings for the 22 largest cultural organizations in the state. Collaboration, not just among the major arts organizations, but among all members of the arts community in Virginia, will raise visibility for the arts.

In designing this project, the Steering Committee looked at models for successful collaboration such as *First Fridays* and *Acts of Faith Festival*. Successful arts collaborations feature programming designed around a common theme and time frame. In the increasingly common *First Friday* events, art galleries in a community hold exhibition events on the same night each month. The *Acts of Faith Festival* takes place annually among the local theatre companies in Richmond. The common theme is faith and the goal is to create dialogue about faith in the community. Participating theatres select and produce a play that addresses faith that also matches the artistic vision of each individual organization. Together, these collaborations have attracted more media attention and patronage than had the programs been presented individually.

### MINDS WIDE OPEN

MINDS WIDE OPEN is the title developed for the 2010 and future statewide arts collaborations. BCF, an advertising firm in Virginia Beach, developed this theme to emphasize the open-minded embracing and appreciation of things outside of the everyday experience.

### *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*

The theme selected for the first MINDS WIDE OPEN is *Women in the Arts*. Though many possible themes were discussed for 2010, *Women in the Arts* stood out as the most engaging and accessible theme to use in this first statewide celebration. The Steering Committee hopes that when this first statewide collaboration is successful, there will be regular MINDS WIDE OPEN celebrations every two or three years in the future, each featuring a new theme.

We invite each Virginia artist and cultural organization to participate by including their own program(s) on the theme of *Women in the Arts* to take place between March and June 2010. This time period includes Women's History Month, Garden Week and Mother's Day so there are many opportunities to build on the theme. Any program around the theme of *Women in the Arts* is welcome - productions of plays by women playwrights, choreography or compositions by women, exhibitions of work by women painters or photographers, films or plays in which the main characters are women.

"THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS IS HONORED TO BE ONE OF THE FIRST SPONSORS OF MINDS WIDE OPEN: VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS. THIS UNPRECEDENTED STATEWIDE COLLABORATION WILL BUILD NEW PARTNERSHIPS AMONG ARTISTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN EVERY CORNER OF THE COMMONWEALTH. THE HUNDREDS OF ARTS EVENTS IN THIS CELEBRATION WILL BE A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF THE BREADTH AND DIVERSITY OF THE PERFORMING, VISUAL AND LITERARY ARTS IN OUR GREAT STATE," SAID DR. LUCIUS ELLSWORTH OF WISE, CHAIR OF THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS.

"THE DOMINION FOUNDATION LOOKS FORWARD TO SUPPORTING THIS STATEWIDE ARTS COLLABORATION SHOWCASING THE LITERARY, PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS," SAID WILLIAM C. HALL JR., DOMINION VICE PRESIDENT-CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND PRESIDENT OF THE DOMINION FOUNDATION. "PERFORMANCES, EXHIBITIONS, LITERARY READINGS AND FILMS WILL ADD A NEW DIMENSION TO THE STORY OF VIRGINIA'S RICH CULTURAL HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS."

## Join the Celebration!

Each of Virginia's 22 largest arts organizations has made a commitment to participate in 2010 and are now asking Virginia arts organizations, artists, colleges, art galleries, libraries and museums to join the celebration!

## MINDS WIDE OPEN:

*Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts* will share a common logo, a statewide advertising campaign, print materials, and a website. Media General has agreed to host and design the website for MINDS WIDE OPEN. Launching October 1, 2008, the website will list all MINDS WIDE OPEN programs taking place across the state.

There will be no additional costs for the participating organizations. MINDS WIDE OPEN events should be programmed into a cultural organization's regular season and funds appropriately budgeted. Grant funding is not available for MINDS WIDE OPEN programs. The Steering Committee is identifying funding for the statewide promotion.

## Further Information

If you would like to join the MINDS WIDE OPEN listserve, email : [melindajscott99@gmail.com](mailto:melindajscott99@gmail.com)

[www.vamindswideopen.com](http://www.vamindswideopen.com)

Launching October 1, 2008

(804) 264 - 6695

## The Planning Team:

Susan Hirschbiel, Virginia Beach, board member of Virginia Commission for the Arts, Virginia Arts Festival, and Virginians for the Arts; Statewide Chair of MINDS WIDE OPEN

Keith Martin, Managing Director, Richmond Ballet; Chair of Steering Committee for *Women in the Arts* celebration

Melinda Scott, Theater Manager of Westminster Canterbury Richmond; Statewide Coordinator of MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*

Peggy Baggett, Executive Director, Virginia Commission for the Arts

The fiscal agent for the project is the Virginians for the Arts Foundation, headquartered in Richmond. Virginians for the Arts is the statewide citizens advocacy group for arts funding.

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**VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS**

"WE HAVE A LOT TO CELEBRATE WITH VIRGINIA'S ARTS COMMUNITY," SAID JENNIFER HUNTER, VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS, ALTRIA CLIENT SERVICES. "THE EMPLOYEES OF ALTRIA GROUP AND ITS FAMILY OF COMPANIES ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE UPCOMING STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT- MINDS WIDE OPEN: VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS," SHE ADDED. "THROUGH THIS FIRST STATEWIDE EFFORT, ARTISTS AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WILL RAISE THE VISIBILITY AND ACCESS TO THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS VIRGINIA."